

REMARKS

Claims 53-56 were pending in this application when last examined. Claims 53 and 54 have been examined on the merits and stand rejected. Claims 55 and 56 are withdrawn.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the Interview held on May 26, 2004. During the interview, it was acknowledged that the Specification is enabling for deletion mutants (including mutant NA 1602 of claim 54) wherein the β -fructofuranosidase gene has been deleted. See Example C4 on page 37, lines 24-27 of the Specification. Accordingly, claim 54 has been rewritten into independent form as suggested by the Examiner.

Claim 56 has been amended to depend from claim 54. Applicants respectfully request that the method of claim 56 be rejoined with the product of claim 54.

Claims 53 and 55 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer thereto. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation or divisional application on any canceled subject matter.

Claims 54 and 56 will be pending in this application upon entry of this amendment.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and early notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number below if he has any suggestions to expedite allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

Koji YANAI et al.

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